

Message Text

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SUBJ: MARCH NARCOTICS WRAP-UP

1. ILLEGAL NARCOTICS ACTIVITY SHOWED A MODEST UP-TURN DURING MARCH, WITH POLICE MAKING SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT ARRESTS IN CASES GENERALLY INVOLVING MARIJUANA. US CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT REMAINED MODERATE.

2. \$3.6 MILLION JACKPOT: ON MARCH 6, BAHAMIAN POLICE FOUND A CACHE OF 76 100-POUND BAGS OF MARIJUANA ON A DESERTED CAY SOUTHEAST OF ELEUTHERA. ALTHOUGH NEWSPAPER REPORTS INDICATED THE FIND, LARGEST IN BAHAMIAN HISTORY, WAS THE ACCIDENTAL RESULT OF A ROUTINE PATROL, EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER LOCAL POLICE HAD ARRESTED A YACHTSMAN FOR MARIJUANA POSSESSION AND EXTRACTED THE LOCATION FROM HIM. ASSUMING THAT THE YACHTSMAN WAS ON HIS WAY TO PICK UP THE MARIJUANA (ESTIMATED STREET VALUE \$3.6 MILLION), AND THAT THERE WAS THEREFORE NO REASON FOR SURVEILLANCE, THE POLICE PICKED UP THE SUPPLY. ON MARCH 15, THE LARGE PILE OF MARIJUANA WAS PUBLICLY BURNED BY THE POLICE.

3. TOUGH TREATMENT: A 26-YEAR OLD BAHAMIAN, ANTHONY MONT-
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GOMERY COOKE, WAS FOUND GUILTY OF POSSESSION OF 125 POUNDS

OF MARIJUANA AND \$6,000 IN PROFITS FROM TRAFFICKING. APPEARING BEFORE MAGISTRATE HERCULES, NOT A PATIENT MAN, COOKE SAID HE WANTED A LAWYER. "I DID NOT ASK YOU ABOUT A LAWYER", HERCULES SAID, "I ASKED YOU IF YOU WERE GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY. YOU ARE A BIG, SENSIBLE MAN - WHAT DO YOU WANT A LAWYER FOR, TO TELL ME HOW GUILTY YOU WAS, OR WHAT?" COOKE PLEADED GUILTY AND WAS SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS AT HARD LABOR. THE \$6,000 WAS TURNED OVER TO THE POLICE FUND. MAGISTRATES LIKE HERCULES ARE TREATING DRUG OFFENDERS IN AN INCREASINGLY SUMMARY FASH-ION.

4. FLAT FEET: IF LOCAL MAGISTRATES ARE TOUGH ON OFFENDERS, THEY HAVE ALSO BEEN GIVING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS HELL. IN TWO UNRELATED CASES DURING MARCH, CHARGES WERE DISMISSED AGAINST TWO ALLEGED OFFENDERS BECAUSE OF POLICE MISTAKES.

A. IN THE FIRST, A YOUNG BAHAMIAN NAMED RALDO CLARKE HAD BEEN ARRESTED FOR IMPORTING 15 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA INTO THE BAHAMAS. THE MARIJUANA WAS CONTAINED IN HASSOCKS, SUPPOSEDLY PART OF A JAMAICA-GREYLAND TRANSHIPMENT OF FURNITURE. WHEN AIRPORT CUSTOMS OFFICERS SPOTTED A PORTER CARRYING THE HASSOCKS FROM THE TRANSHIPMENT AREA TO A CAR PARKED OUTSIDE, THEY STEPPED IN AND ARRESTED CLARKE. CLARKE WAS ARRAIGNED, PLEADED NOT GUILTY AND WAS RELEASED ON BOND. SO FAR SO GOOD. SEVERAL MONTHS WENT BY BEFORE HIS TRIAL DATE, DURING WHICH TIME THE MARIJUANA WAS KEPT IN A POLICE WAREHOUSE. SHORTLY BEFORE THE TRIAL, A POLICE ANALYST TESTED THE EVIDENCE AND FOUND THAT IT WAS INDEED MARIJUANA. HE ALSO FOUND, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS FRESH, PROBABLY PLACED IN THE WAREHOUSE ONLY A MATTER OF DAYS BEFORE HIS EXAMINATION. POLICE OFFICERS TESTIFIED AT COOKE'S TRIAL THAT ACCESS TO THE WAREHOUSE WAS PRACTICALLY UNRESTRICTED AND MAGISTRATE HERCULES, FUMING ABOUT "POLICE BUNGLING", DISMISSED THE CASE AGAINST CLARKE.

B. THE SECOND CASE LOOKED EVEN WORSE. THIS INVOLVED THE CASE OF THE MARIJUANA IN THE COFFIN, REPORTED PREVIOUSLY. IT WAS ALLEGED THAT BUSTER COLEBROOKE, A BAHAMIAN SALESMAN, CONSPIRED WITH A LOCAL UNDERTAKER TO BRING A COFFIN FULL OF MARIJUANA INTO NASSAU FROM JAMAICA. BAHAMIAN CUSTOMS WAS TIPPED OFF TO THE SCHEME, AND HELD THE COFFIN WHEN IT ARRIVED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN NASSAU. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, AN UNSUSPECTING COLEBROOKE ARRIVED AT THE AIRPORT TO PICK UP THE COFFIN. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CUSTOMS OFFICER WHO KNEW THE FACTS OF THE CASE HAD GONE TO LUNCH, AND THE COFFIN WAS RELEASED TO COLEBROOKE WITHOUT EVER HAVING BEEN OPENED BY POLICE OR CUSTOMS OFFICIALS. BY THE TIME IT WAS TRACED TO THE UNDERTAKER'S, COLEBROOKE WAS NO WHERE ON THE SCENE. SINCE THE UNDERTAKER'S TESTIMONY AGAINST COLEBROOKE WAS INADMISSABLE, MAGISTRATE OSADABEY VERY

RELUCTANTLY HAD TO DISMISS THE CASE AGAINST HIM, THERE BEING NO EVIDENCE THAT COLEBROOKE EVER HAD POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA AS OPPOSED TO THE COFFIN. THE MAGISTRATE TOLD COLEBROOKE HE HATED TO LET HIM GO BUT THAT THE LATTER HAD JUST BEEN LUCKY. "IT IS A PITY", THE MAGISTRATE SAID ANGRILY, "IT GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT SOMETHING IS REALLY GOING ON."

5. FIGURES: ASSISTANT POLICE COMMISSINER CRAWLEY RECENTLY REAPORTED THAT DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS OVER 8,500 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA HAD BEEN SEIZED, TOGETHER WITH 1.5 OUNCES OF COCAINE (ALTHOUGH VERY RECENT INFORMATION INDICATES THAT TRAFFIC IN COCAINE VIA THE BAHAMAS MAY BE INCREASING). HE SAID THAT NO HEROIN HAD BEEN TAKEN. OVER THE SAME SIX-MONTH PERIOD, 215 PERSONS HAD BEEN ARRESTED FOR TRAFFICKING IN MARIJUANA AND OTHER DRUGS, 48 OF WHOM WERE US CITIZENS, 18 JAMAICANS, FOUR CANADIANS, TWO GERMANS, THREE "OTHERS", AND 140 BAHAMIANS.

7. CROP DESTRUCTION: POLICE REPORT PRIVATELY THAT A FIELD OF FREE-GROWING MARIJUANA WAS FOUND ON AN UNINHABITED ISLAND NEAR SAN SALVADOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO. POLICE BURNED IT.

7. A TOTAL OF 12 US CITIZENS WERE ARRESTED DURING MARCH FOR POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA.
RIDGWAY

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